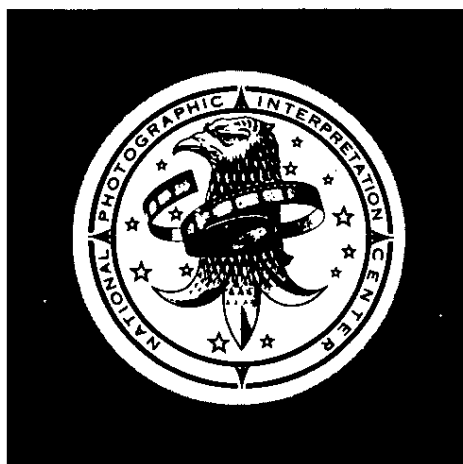


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**NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC
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PHOOTOGRAPHIC
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REPORT

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**FORCE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE
BIROBIDZHAN AREA, USSR (TSR)**

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FORCE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE BIROBIDZHAN AREA, USSR (TSR)

1. (TSR) Since May 1977, imagery has provided evidence of major changes in the ground forces units along the Sino-Soviet border in the Birobidzhan area of the Far East Military District. These changes include the relocation of major elements of an active motorized rifle division (MRD) to a point 42 nautical miles (nm) closer to the Sino-Soviet border, the probable activation of the second-generation (mobilization) division at Birobidzhan¹, the possible upgrading of the nondivisional artillery unit at Birobidzhan, and the identification of a new nondivisional signal unit in the Birobidzhan area. The overall pattern formed by these changes may indicate that a new Soviet army or corps is being formed in the Birobidzhan area (Figure 1).

2. (TSR) Prior to May 1977, the active MRD in the Birobidzhan area was housed at five installations:

Birobidzhan Barracks AL-1
Birobidzhan Barracks AL-3
Babstovo Army Barracks AL-1
Bidzhan Army Barracks AL-1
Bidzhan Army Barracks AL-2

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A tank regiment was housed in Babstovo, one motorized rifle regiment (MRR) and an anti-aircraft regiment were housed in Bidzhan, and the rest of the division was housed at Birobidzhan Barracks AL-1 and AL-3.



FIGURE 1. LOCATION MAP OF THE BIROBIDZHAN/BIDZHAN/BABSTOVO AREA, USSR

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3. (TSR) Between [] one of the two resident MRRs left Birobidzhan AL-1. An identical MRR was subsequently identified at Babstovo AL-1 (42 nm to the southwest) on imagery of []

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4. (TSR) On [] FROG equipment was first identified at Babstovo AL-1. This FROG equipment was probably moved from Birobidzhan AL-3.

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5. (TSR) During May—June 1978, large quantities of equipment were observed being transported from Birobidzhan AL-1. On [], 65 armored personnel carriers of the remaining active MRR housed at this installation were observed adjacent to a rail-spur near the facility. By [] (Figure 2), all of the units of the active division, including the remaining MRR, an engineer battalion, a reconnaissance battalion, and a chemical battalion, had departed Birobidzhan AL-1. Identical units were observed at Babstovo AL-1 on imagery of [] (Figure 3). Also newly identified at Babstovo AL-1 on [] were an artillery regiment, a FROG battalion, a rocket launcher battalion, an antitank battalion, and a signal battalion. Imagery of [] revealed that units identical to all the newly identified units at Babstovo except the signal battalion were absent from Birobidzhan AL-3 (Figure 4). The point of origin of the new signal battalion is not known at this time.

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6. (TSR) As a result of these relocations, this MRD is now concentrated in the Babstovo/Bidzhan area, 42 nm closer to the Sino-Soviet border than before.

7. (TSR) The [] imagery of Birobidzhan AL-1, showing the absence of the active MRD units, also revealed substantial changes to the second-generation (mobilization) division housed at this installation. Elements of this division, including an MRR, an engineer battalion, and the prime movers from the artillery regiment, were observed moving into the vehicle parks vacated by the active MRD units (Figure 2). By [] the movement of the second-generation MRR and the engineer battalion into the vacated vehicle parks had been completed (Figure 5). The second-generation antiaircraft artillery regiment moved into the vehicle park previously vacated by the active engineer battalion. This movement into larger capacity permanent facilities may be an indication of the activation of this second-generation division.

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8. (TSR) On [] significant amounts of new equipment were observed with a nondivisional artillery unit housed at Birobidzhan AL-3. The new equipment observed included a rocket launcher battalion composed of 18 BM-21 rocket launchers, a SMALL FRED radar, a possible BIG FRED radar, 20 MT-LB prime movers, and 65 M-1972 medium artillery tractors (Figure 6). It is unclear, however, whether the rocket launcher battalion is subordinate to the nondivisional artillery unit or to the second-generation division at Birobidzhan AL-1. By [], vehicle parking for the artillery unit had been expanded into the areas vacated by the units of the active MRD. The addition of this equipment represents a significant increase in the firepower and mobility of the artillery unit.

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9. (TSR) On [] a new nondivisional signal unit was identified at Birobidzhan AL-1. This unit is in addition to the signal regiment and the troposcatter relay battalion housed there. Equipment observed included 43 radio van trucks and five command vehicles. Neither this unit nor the troposcatter relay battalion usually housed at this installation were present on imagery of [], and neither unit has subsequently been located. At that time, no major changes were observed in the other nondivisional/army-level units in the Birobidzhan area; that is, the signal regiment at Birobidzhan AL-1 or the SA-4 brigade at Birobidzhan AL-3.

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10. (TSR) The relocation of the active MRD, the probable activation of the second-generation division at Birobidzhan, the upgrading of the nondivisional artillery unit, and the identification of a new nondivisional signal unit in the Birobidzhan area may indicate that a new army or corps is being formed in the Birobidzhan/Bidzhan/Babstovo area. This would be in addition to the three confirmed deployed armies and one possible army currently being formed along the Sino-Soviet border in the Far East Military District.

REFERENCES

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MAPS OR CHARTS

ACIC. US Air Target Chart, Series 200, Sheets 0203-25 and 0282-1, scale 1:200,000 (UNCLASSIFIED)

DOCUMENT

1. DIA. DDI-1100-93-77, *Soviet Second-Generation Divisions (U)*, Sep 77 (SECRET)

REQUIREMENT

Project 130016NL

(S) Comments and queries regarding this report are welcome. They may be directed to [] Warsaw Pact Forces Division, Imagery Exploitation Group, NPIC, []

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